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# PUNCTUATION PUT-ON LEARNING

Practice punctuation in dialogue, narrative, and poetry  
(ages 8-14)

**by John D. Perron**

Requires: ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge

Diskette version (1):  
(APX-20205)

ATARI 810 Disk Drive  
32K RAM

Edition B

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# PUNCTUATION PUT-ON

by

John D. Perron

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# Introduction

## OVERVIEW

Punctuation is merely writing's way of dealing with the pauses, gestures, and emotional content of speech. Its rules exist to guide us all toward the same goal: communication. Yet, there is always a higher ingredient in the writing act: creativity. So even with general agreement on the rules of punctuation, professional writers often find it necessary to bend the rules to express themselves in just the right fashion. The result is that punctuation has become one of the most arbitrary subjects taught in the schools. A teacher may introduce a rule of punctuation (i.e., using a comma following an introductory clause) only to have a student come up with an example of real writing that ignores the rule.

So why not use real writing to teach punctuation usage? That's what PUNCTUATION PUT-ON is all about: a gamelike drill and practice program which utilizes three writing styles -- dialogue, narrative, and poetry -- in three stories and two poems. PUNCTUATION PUT-ON does not teach the rules of punctuation; its goal is not to replace the teacher. It simply places the student in the position of the writer, confronting writing and making punctuation judgments on the basis of position and meaning.

PUNCTUATION PUT-ON is designed to help students:

- Practice basic punctuation marks on a computer keyboard.

- Practice punctuation usage within different writing styles.

- Practice punctuation usage with full contextual support.

- Keep track of errors for diagnostic purposes.

One of five writing selections appears on the TV screen. The cursor blinks in place of a randomly selected punctuation mark. The student decides which mark goes there and puts it back by typing it. The computer moves faster than the eye, and memory fails in the face of so many different punctuation marks. Students learn to use the context to back up their choices of different punctuation marks.

PUNCTUATION PUT-ON keeps track of all correct answers and records them, including averages within and across all writings. The program also includes diagnostics which keep track of each punctuation mistake and help students identify their own weaknesses. As a bonus, the program includes a practice section to help students learn to type the basic punctuation marks used in the program: ! " ; : ' - , ? . In addition, this manual includes information to help parents and teachers decide whether the basic punctuation marks in the five writings are appropriate for their grade level.

## REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge  
32K RAM  
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

## CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

Users wishing to contact the author may write to him at:

527 - 41st Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94121

## Getting started

### LOADING PUNCTUATION PUT-ON INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the cartridge slot of your computer.
2. Have your computer turned OFF.
3. Turn on your disk drive.
4. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the PUNCTUATION PUT-ON diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door. (Use disk drive one if you have more than one drive.)
5. Turn on your computer and your TV set. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

### THE FIRST DISPLAY SCREEN

While the program is loading into computer memory, music accompanies the following title screen:

PUNCTUATION PUT-ON  
! " ; ? : ' - , .

JOHN D. PERRON  
(C) 1983

LOADING PROGRAM

Figure 1 Program loading display

## Using PUNCTUATION PUT-ON

### ENTERING YOUR NAME

The program begins with the following prompt:

```
TYPE YOUR FIRST NAME...PRESS [RETURN]  
NAME--> ?__
```

Type your name (up to 12 letters) and press the RETURN key. Then the program prints your name on the screen and asks if it's spelled correctly. Respond by pressing the letter "Y" for yes or "N" for no. If you press "N," the program asks you to type in your name again.

### THE MAIN MENU

The program's main menu offers six choices in the following screen display:

```
          PUNCTUATION  
          PUT-ON  
  
-->  STORIES  
      PRACTICE  
      CHANGES  
      SCORE  
      ERRORS  
      END  
  
[SELECT]  [START]
```

Figure 2 Main menu

Each option is explained in detail below. Press the SELECT key to move the pointing hand from choice to choice. Press the START key when you've decided.

### STORIES

Press the START key to move to the stories menu, as follows:



PUNCTUATION PUT-ON  
SELECTIONS

-->TAMMY TYPES  
SPINNER  
THE SQUIRREL  
MIRROR-FACE  
CAN I GO?  
MAIN MENU

[SELECT] [START]

Figure 3 Stories menu

The six choices include three stories, two poems, and a means to return to the main menu.

The first selection, TAMMY TYPES, deals with dialogue; this writing style presents--among other things--the problems of when to use commas and periods with quotation marks.

The second selection, SPINNER, consists mainly of narrative, with punctuation depending on the flow of events rather than quoted speech.

The third selection, THE SQUIRREL, is a poem-- and everyone know how arbitrary poets can be when it comes to punctuation!

MIRROR-FACE is another poem and even more arbitrary than the last one; both poems involve more difficult punctuation choices.

The final selection is a story, CAN I GO?, with more quoted comments in dialogue style.

See the Grade Level section of this manual for more information on the selections.

Choose any of the five writings as often as you like. There are 20 punctuation marks in each selection, and 10 are randomly selected during each play (no mark is repeated during the same play). A message like the following appears at the beginning of each selection:

PUNCTUATION PUT-ON  
SELECTION #1

READ THE FULL STORY FIRST

LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE  
PUNCTUATION MARKS  
PRESS [RETURN]

Figure 4 Stories - instructions

When you press the RETURN key, the selection appears on the screen. At the bottom, this prompt appears:

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO START  
PRESS [RETURN]

Press the RETURN key to see each writing on the upper two-thirds of the TV screen. The program randomly selects a punctuation mark and replaces it with the blinking cursor. The following instructions appear at the bottom of the screen:

TYPE A PUNCTUATION MARK

when you type a punctuation mark, it replaces the cursor on the TV screen. The program tells you immediately if you're right by sounding a few rising notes and displaying a star. If you're wrong, it sounds two descending notes, displays the right mark, and gives you the following instructions:

TRY AGAIN AND WATCH IT BLINK

When you're finished with each punctuation mark, the program prompts you to press the RETURN key.

The program accepts only punctuation mark keys, ignoring all others.

You have twelve seconds to decide which mark goes there. If twelve seconds pass before you type a response, a message displays "TIME'S UP!" and a whistle sounds. This is counted as a "time-out". Then the program displays the correct mark and asks the student to type it before moving on. During play, you may have only five time-outs; the program calls further play to a halt and returns to the main menu, erasing any scores during that play.

You may quit in the middle of a story. Press the OPTION key (while the cursor is blinking) to leave a selection without having your scores or errors counted. You return to the main menu.

If you complete a selection without an error, the program congratulates you with a flashing "WOW! NO ERRORS!!" Then you return to the stories menu. The number of times you make a perfect score is also recorded.

When the program has presented ten punctuation marks, it returns to the stories menu to await another selection. You may repeat a selection any number of times, or choose a new one. To return to the main menu, move the pointing hand to that choice and press the START key.

## PRACTICE

The second choice from the main menu is practice. This is a good place to begin if you don't know how to type punctuation marks yet. Press the START key to move to a display of the punctuation marks used in the program:

### PRACTICE PUNCTUATION MARKS

PRESS SHIFT WITH

! EXCLAMATION  
" QUOTATION  
' APOSTROPHE  
? QUESTION  
: COLON

TYPE THESE ALONE

, COMMA  
. PERIOD  
; SEMICOLON  
- HYPHEN

TYPE TO BLINK

Figure 5 Practice

Some punctuation marks require the use of the SHIFT key in typing. If you type the wrong key, the program tells you to "TRY AGAIN". Practice as long as you wish, and then press the RETURN key to return to the main menu.

## CHANGES

This choice allows new students to enroll in PUNCTUATION PUT-ON without leaving the program. When you use the program, the score builds up; when a new student uses this option to enroll, all the information about your responses is erased from the computer's memory. Press the START key for the prompt to enter your name (the same one that appeared at the beginning of the program.) This is where a new student signs in.

Next, the program asks if the new student wants to start with a fresh score (zero). If the answer is "Y" for yes, the program erases all previous records. Then you see the main menu and start over, as if the program has just begun.

## SCORE

This option shows how you're doing in each writing and across all writings. Press the START key for a display of your scores, including a grade-like average. (If you select this option at the start, you see the message "NO SCORE YET".)

The following is an example of a score screen display:

```

                                YOUR SCORE
                                -----
SELECTION #1  TAMMY TYPES      (STORY)
-----
LAST TRY:      10 OUT OF 10 = 100%
ALL TRIES:     10 OUT OF 10 = 100%
-----
SELECTION #2  SPINNER          (STORY)
-----
LAST TRY:      8 OUT OF 10 = 80%
ALL TRIES:     8 OUT OF 10 = 80%
-----
SELECTION #4  MIRROR-FACE      (POEM)
-----
LAST TRY:      6 OUT OF 10 = 60%
ALL TRIES:     11 OUT OF 20 = 55%
-----
ALL SELECTIONS - TOTALS
-----
LATEST:        24 OUT OF 30 = 80%
GRAND:         29 OUT OF 40 = 72%
-----
TIMEOUTS 1                                PERFECT 1
                                PRESS [RETURN]
```

Figure 6 Sample score



You see the number of correct answers, and how many responses were correct out of the number of attempts (10 per turn). The totals include averages within and across all five writings. If you complete a selection without scoring, the program awards a free point for trying. TIME-OUTS, at the lower left of the score, allow you to check your speed in responding. The number after PERFECT at the lower right shows how many times a student answered all the punctuation marks correctly in a turn.

To return to the main menu, press the RETURN key.

## ERRORS

Check the kinds of errors you made in PUNCTUATION PUT-ON by choosing this option. Press the START key to move to the Error Checklist screen. You see each punctuation mark along with the number of times you missed it.

The following is an example of an error checklist:

### ERROR CHECKLIST

Type of Error	Number Made
! EXCLAMATION MARK.....	2
" QUOTATION MARK.....	0
' APOSTROPHE.....	0
? QUESTION MARK.....	3
, COMMA.....	1
. PERIOD.....	1
; SEMICOLON.....	1
: COLON.....	3
- HYPHEN.....	0
TOTAL.....	11

PRESS [RETURN]

Figure 7 Error checklist

If you select this option before starting, you see the message "NONE LISTED YET." Take a turn at one of the writings first. Press the RETURN key to move back to the main menu.

END

Press the START key to reload the program.

## Notes for parents and teachers

### GRADE LEVELS

Teachers may wish to know the value of this program for their students. The information on the next page shows how PUNCTUATION PUT-ON may be used with students in the third through the eighth grades, even though it is aimed primarily at fourth and fifth graders.

The program was written by an author with over a decade of experience in curriculum and software design. His survey of published textbooks (grades 1-8) revealed that instruction in the basic punctuation marks ( ! " ' ; , . - ? ) occurs over and over again at different grade levels, as shown below:

Punctuation Marks	Grade Levels
ENDING:	
Period (.) .....	1 - 8
Question Mark (?) .....	1 - 8
Exclamation Mark (!) .....	1 - 8
OTHER:	
Comma (,) .....	1 - 8
Apostrophe (') .....	3 - 8
Quotation Mark (") .....	4 - 8
Semicolon (;) .....	5 - 8
Colon (:) .....	5 - 8
Hyphen (-) .....	5 - 8

Figure 8 Punctuation instruction  
by grade level (as found in textbooks)

Using the above information, we can place the punctuation marks of the stories and poems in this program at the following grades:

SELECTION TITLE GRADE LEVELS	NO. & TYPE OF PUNCTUATION MARKS								
	.	?	!	,	'	"	;	:	-
TAMMY TYPES (STORY) 4-8	5	2	0	6	1	6	0	0	0
SPINNER (STORY) 4-8	2	1	3	5	3	6	0	0	0
THE SQUIRREL (POEM) 5-8	3	1	2	11	1	0	1	0	1
MIRROR-FACE (POEM) 5-8	0	2	6	4	2	0	1	3	2
CAN I GO? (STORY) 4-8	4	4	2	3	3	4	0	0	0
Totals (100)	14	10	3	9	10	16	2	3	3

Figure 9 Grade level summary

The totals reveal only two semicolons, three colons, and three hyphens in the selection; in other words, less than 10 per cent of the punctuation marks occur at or above the fifth grade level. So the program should prove beneficial for older, remedial students. In addition, 40 per cent of the marks are end punctuation, while a hefty 28 per cent involve comma usage; thus the main focus of the program is the middle elementary grade student. One suggestion, not carried out in the program, but valuable for grades 3-4: don't count the scores in the poetry selections, since "exceptions prove the rule" often pays off!

## ENJOYABLE CONTENT

PUNCTUATION PUT-ON incorporates writings designed to entertain young students and help them retain what they learn. Research in the language arts points out how isolated sentences in drill and practice situations seldom obtain the results intended. The use of stories and poems provides a context for their work, enlisting their attention and allowing them a chance to vest their interest for more favorable results. This program consists of three stories and two poems, all but one by the author (THE SQUIRREL is a well-known old poem whose author remains anonymous). The selections are printed below for your information; they should not be shared with the students in written form. You may wish to prepare them for using the program by reading the stories aloud, however.

## TAMMY TYPES

Tammy sat down at the computer. She looked at the keys and asked her teacher, "Now what do I do?"

"Each key has a letter on it," said the teacher.

"But I don't want to send a letter," said Tammy. "I want to learn about the computer."

"No, silly," the teacher smiled, "the letters make words."

"Oh, I get it," cried Tammy. "A key types a word."

"No," the teacher said, "a key types a letter."

"O.K.," Tammy laughed, "but who will I mail it to?"

## SPINNER

It was David's birthday. His parents gave him a special present. It was a new puppy! David just loved it. The two of them ran and played until David wondered, "What will I call him?"

At first he tried out names like Spot, Lassie, and Rover. David didn't like those names. He wanted one that was different. While he thought, his new puppy began to spin around and around, trying hard to catch its tail. "That's it!" David laughed. "I will call him Spinner!"



## THE SQUIRREL

1.	3.
Whisky, frisky	Furly, curly
Hippity-hop,	What a tail!
Up he goes	Tall as a feather,
To the tree top.	Broad as a sail!
2.	4.
Whirly, twirly,	Where's his supper?
Round and round,	In the shell;
Down he scampers	Snappity, crackity,
To the ground.	Out it fell.

## MIRROR-FACE

A mirror-face: See, there I am!  
Smiling first, and now a silly grin;  
Laughing, blinking, winking, then:  
Disappear! I'm back again!  
Oh, mirror-face! Will you change?  
Growing up to look so strange?  
Or maybe you'll just always be:  
Disappear! The same old me!

## CAN I GO?

Ken came right home after school and yelled, "Can I go?"  
"Where?" his mother asked.  
"You know," he said.  
"No," she answered, "I don't know."  
"But all the other kids are going!" he shouted.  
"Well, where are they going?" she shouted back.  
"Oh," Ken said. "They're going to the circus."  
"Well," his mother smiled, "why didn't you say so?"  
Ken waited. "Well, can I go?"  
"Go ask your father!" his mother said and turned away.





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## Review Form

We are interested in your experiences with our programs and documentation, both favorable and unfavorable. Many of our authors are eager to improve their programs if they know what you want. And, of course, we want to know about any bugs that slipped by us, so the author can fix them. We also want to

know whether our instructions are meeting your needs. You are our best source for suggesting improvements! Please help us by taking a moment to fill in this review sheet. Fold the sheet in thirds and seal it so that the address on the bottom of the back becomes the envelope front. Thank you for helping us!

1. Name and APX number of program.

---

---

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

---

---

---

3. What do you especially like about this program?

---

---

---

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

---

---

---

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate or comprehensive?

---

---

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Easy to use
- \_\_\_\_\_ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoyable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-instructive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use (non-game programs)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

---

---

---

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

---

---

---

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

---

---

---

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

---

---

11. Other comments about the program or user instructions:

---

---

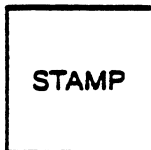
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